



**CGA Environment Committee
February 2, 2009 Public Hearing
Support for RB 661 AA Expanding The Beverage Container Redemption Provisions
To Include Noncarbonated Beverages
Testimony by Cheryl Dunson, Public Issues Vice President**

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut, comprised of nearly 2400 members, strongly supports policies to promote the re-use and recycling of solid waste. Indeed, the League of Women Voters of Connecticut was among the organizations that worked in coalition to pass Connecticut's current "bottle law" and for the mandatory recycling law.

The League wholeheartedly supports the expansion of the beverage container redemption program to include water and other non-carbonated nonalcoholic drinks and the increase of the deposit to 10 cents. According to the Container Recycling Institute, Connecticut's 2006 beverage sales (the most recent data available) included approximately 845 million noncarbonated beverage containers - reflecting an increase of over 150 million more containers than in 2005.¹ Connecticut's current beverage container redemption rates of approximately 65-70% demonstrate that Connecticut's long-standing user-funded program is effective and equitable, i.e., only those that use the designated products are subject to the program. The state of Michigan's 10-cent deposit has spurred the highest recycling rate in the country at 97.2%!² By increasing the deposit to 10 cents, Connecticut may be able to achieve an increase in recycling rates by 20% or more.

The League views RB 661 as an effective method to promote recycling of solid waste by expanding the redemption program. RB 661 is consistent with the Department of Environmental Protection's December 2006 *State Solid Waste Management Plan* that calls for reducing the amount of waste generated - in part by dramatically increasing the target recycling rate from 30% to 58%.

However the success of this excellent plan will depend upon the effectiveness of its implementation. If the plan consistently guides policies and public and private actions, our state will more likely achieve its goals. If the plan is ignored and gathers dust, we get less than intended, or worse, what we did not want. As noted in the Plan "... if waste reduction and recycling efforts are not reinvigorated and if more waste is not diverted from disposal, Connecticut will face an increasing need for disposal capacity at a time when available land is in shorter supply, construction and operating costs are higher, and the public is less willing to accept additional waste disposal facilities."³

The League urges this Committee to support RB 661.

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¹ <http://www.container-recycling.org/>

² <http://www.bottlebill.org/legislation/usa/michigan.htm>

³ State of Connecticut, Solid Waste Management Plan Executive Summary, P. ES-3